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Served 14 Years

Cuba Accused U.S. Exporter of Link to CIA

Frank C. Emmick was an entrepreneur from Ohio who set out to make his fortune as the world's largest exporter of frog legs when he set up business in Cuba after Fidel Castro took power in 1959.

Four years and several arrests later, Emmick was charged in 1963 with being the Central Intelligence Agency's No. 1 agent on the island, for which he served 14 years of a 30-year sentence in Cuban prisons.

Emmick denied being a CIA agent, "let alone the chief," but he later revealed that in the early 1970s he somehow smuggled a mysterious letter to Richard Helms, then director of the CIA.

Emmick, one of the last five American political prisoners held in Cuba, was released on Jan. 1, 1978, because of heart disease.

Pattern of Arrests

Emmick was one of several American businessmen lured to post-revolutionary Cuba in 1959. However, when Castro nationalized the island's businesses and the United States broke diplomatic relations in 1961, Emmick was arrested, interrogated and released. This became a regular ordeal for Emmick, and the questioning intensified after the April Bay of Pigs incident, the abortive U.S.-directed attempt to invade Cuba's beaches.

Although Emmick "tried to live as quietly as possible" after being stopped by the Cuban government while trying to leave the country, he was arrested for the last time in 1963 and sent to prison. He refused to work in the prison quarry and suffered two heart attacks.

The Ohio prisoner's weakened condition was noticed by former President Jimmy Carter's envoys during their 1977 visit to Cuba and they convinced Castro to release him immediately.

Emmick spent the last three years traveling across the United States giving speeches about his ordeal. He was 65 when he collapsed and died in Toledo, Ohio, April 5.

—SUSAN SEAGER